

*78 Indicted on Drug, Violence and Gang Related Charges*

*Newburgh, NY* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today released the following statement in response to the FBI's successful sting operation to crackdown on Newburgh gang crime. The anti-gang operations were conducted and coordinated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the U.S. Attorney's Office; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; Immigration and Customs Enforcement; New York State Troopers; the Offices of the Orange County District Attorney and Sheriff; and the City of Newburgh Police Department.

"Today, the FBI along with other federal agencies, and state, county and local law enforcement sent a message that should be heard loud and clear by the gang members who have for far too long terrorized the streets of Newburgh: if you use this community to sell drugs, engage in violence and commit terrible crimes, you will be captured and brought to justice.

"I am grateful for the agents and police who have worked so hard over the last 16 months to investigate and arrest the 78 gang members who are now indicted on various charges. Without their dedication to keeping our streets safe, this operation would never have been possible. They deserve our thanks and congratulations.

"Today's operations are a needed and positive step in addressing the spiraling violence and crime in the City of Newburgh. We now need to follow up on these operations by strengthening community youth initiatives and supporting local crime prevention efforts. Since 2007, I've secured over a million dollars in funding for youth violence and gang prevention activities and for community policing for the city of Newburgh. Despite these efforts, Newburgh still led the state in violent crimes per capita in 2008 and is on track to do so again this year.

"Tomorrow, I will join U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand for a roundtable discussion with city officials, community leaders and local law enforcement on the actions we can take to follow-up on today's operations in order to help secure a safer future for the residents of Newburgh. I remain committed to assisting local leaders in their efforts to revitalize the city and provide our

youth with the opportunities and support they need to fulfill their potentials and avoid the gangs and violence that have so tragically impacted this struggling community."